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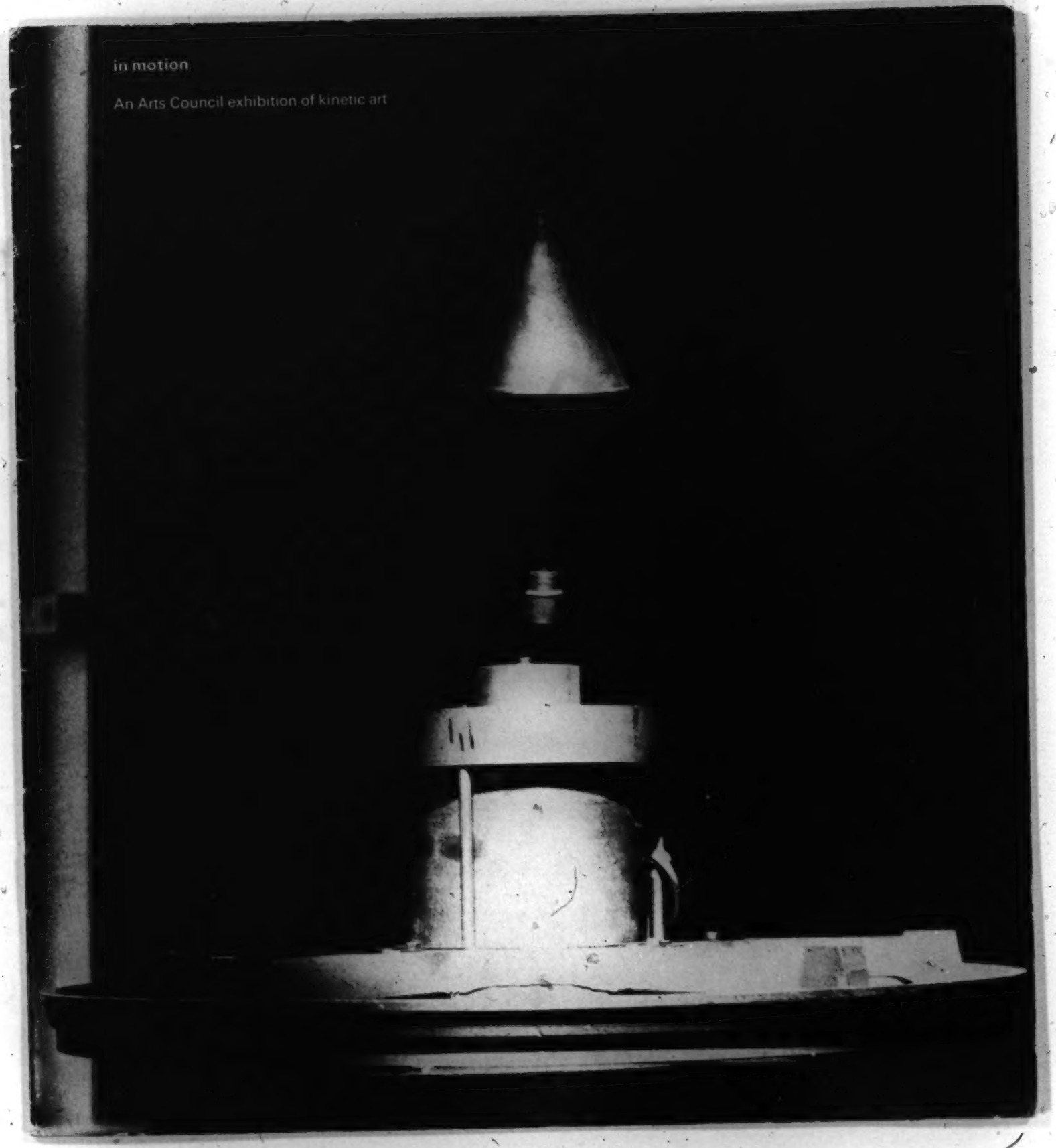
in motion

An Arts Council exhibition of kinetic art



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1966

Pol Bury

Lygia Clark

Gianni Colombo

Gerhard von Graevenitz

Liliane Lijn

David Medalla

Jesús-Rafael Soto

Takis

Jean Tinguely

cover
Ballet Magnetique, Hommage à Vaslav Nijinsky 1964
photo: Clay Perry

Shenval Press

The exhibition will be seen in the following places:
The Bear Lane Gallery, Oxford October 3–28
The Arts Council Gallery, Cambridge November 5–26
The Art Gallery, Oldham December 3–24
The City Art Gallery, Leeds January 2–21, 1967
The University, Leicester January 28–February 18

Foreword

In February 1965 an exhibition of kinetic art, 'Art and Movement', was held in Edinburgh, organized by the Scottish Arts Council, and which included twenty-five artists from the world over. There have been several other exhibitions in this country on the same theme in the last year or two, such as the one arranged by Father Cyril Barrett of Warwick University this summer. But in this exhibition, 'In Motion', the intention has been to examine the differing approaches of a few artists in more detail.

When this exhibition was originally conceived with the Bear Lane Gallery in Oxford, it was planned that it should be shown in Oxford and Cambridge only. Later it was decided to extend the tour to three further places, and for this reason a number of works will be added after Oxford.

The exhibition has been selected by Mr Guy Brett, who has also written the catalogue, and we are most indebted to him for all his help and advice. We are also most grateful to all those who have allowed us to borrow works – their names will be found in the catalogue under each work they have lent – and particularly to Mr Paul Keeler of the Signals Gallery from whom many exhibits have come. We would also like to thank the artists themselves, some of whom have kindly written a special note for the catalogue.

G. W.

September 1966

Radical indeed is the difference between an evolution whose continuous phases penetrate one another by a kind of internal growth, and an unfurling whose distinct parts are placed in juxtaposition to one another. The fan one spreads out might be opened with increasing rapidity, and even instantaneously; it would still display the same embroidery, prefigured on the silk. But a real evolution, if ever it is accelerated or retarded, is entirely modified from within; its acceleration or retardation is precisely that internal modification. Its content and its duration are one and the same thing.

Henri Bergson, *The Creative Mind*, 1946.

Because kinetic art can be very complicated and intriguing technically it is usually this side which gets written about. And it is probably why kinetic art has been suddenly so popular, in contrast to all other kinds of abstract art since the early years of the century, and even today. To concentrate on the technical side of movement is to see movement as a style, a separate pocket of modern art with its own inventors and its own special characteristics, to imply that movement entered art when other styles had either become worn-out or reached a dead-end.

This is to take movement in a literal sense, as people for example at first took cubism. But what was important in cubism was not cubes, but a new kind of pictorial space. It is the same with kinetic art. It is the new feeling for space in the work of the best kinetic artists which makes it so exciting. It has evolved out of the discoveries of the artists of the earlier part of the century but it is freer and more open to life than anything they imagined.

Above the details of personality, art has always expressed how man experiences space, how he conceives of his situation in the world. The dimensions he gives space are his own dimensions, his own measure. In the twentieth century artists have burst open in all directions the space conception of the Renaissance – which had become literally constricting in the light of new experiences. The space conception of the Renaissance was static; it represented the view of a single observer through the device of perspective and it separated experience into categories with neatly drawn boundaries. It was the space of common-sense, the shapes of appearances were final. The work of art itself was as clearly marked off from its subject as it was from the spectator.

Every twentieth-century experience burst through this neat cats-cradle of rational certainties – the dimensions of our space are still expanding beyond it. At first any penetration beyond the finality of common-sense forms was experienced as painful, as a disintegration. People complained that Cézanne, for example, was unable to 'finish' his paintings, that the vibrations that hovered around the outlines of his objects and in the air between them were the result of *delirium tremens*. Later people complained that Mondrian's paintings were only halfway stages towards some final form, and said they must never become 'ends in themselves'.

In fact the very opposite of incomplete, these men were trying to communicate the *totality* of our experience of things, not simply their external appearance. In his 'Creative Credo' (1920) Paul Klee described his broadened approach to a single object:

'An apple-tree in blossom, the roots, the rising sap, the trunk, a cross-section with annual rings, the blossom, its structure, its sexual function, the fruit, the core, the seeds. An interplay of states of growth.'

Klee's emphasis is on function, a harmony of related functions, rather than on outward form. His painting or drawing would not be a depiction of an apple-tree in a field but an attempt to find a pictorial structure to suggest its interplay of functions extending through time and space. He would try to construct his painting according to principles similar to the tree's; therefore its relationship to reality would be closer than that of a representational picture – more in the nature of a model. The language of the work of art would no longer be separated from reality by the barrier of representation, governed by the laws of 'likeness'. As the poet Mallarmé wrote years before: 'The word *like* no longer exists for me.'

Through the twentieth century art seems to have become continuously more organic. Since the first abstract artists made the break with appearances this closeness to nature has come not through going back to copying what we see, but finding a spatial structure parallel to what we know (and continue to discover) of nature in all its dynamic interrelations. It would be wrong to give too simple a picture of how this has developed through the century. In a general way every kind of expression has been affected by the change from a static to a dynamic view of life, but it hasn't developed by following a neat line of theory. In fact the relationship between theory and practice in modern art is a fascinating one. Thinkers among artists such as Moholy-Nagy, Klee, Mondrian, Duchamp and Gabo saw the direction things were going. Moholy-Nagy prophesied with precision many of the preoccupations of artists today. But he, like the others, appreciated the gulf between the external technics and philosophies of art and its inner poetic force. Gabo, for example, wrote in 1937: 'To bring Time as a reality into our consciousness, to make it active and perceivable, we need the real movement of substantial masses removable in space.' He felt he could not do this without 'killing through the mechanical parts, the pure sculptural content'. However today Takis has done it, by intuitively discovering a kind of sculptural space which arises directly and naturally from the motion of electricity and mechanical parts and is inconceivable without them.

The use of movement in art today gives a deeper significance to the discoveries of the abstract painters and sculptors, extending greatly their ideas of space. It seems to owe more to the 'static' works of Mondrian, Klee, Kandinsky, Malevich, Gabo and Brancusi than it does to previous uses of movement in mechanics or entertainment, or even to the works of an artist like Calder, whose language of movement has always been strongly representational. The abstract artists cleared away representational space and gave the work concrete meaning. At the same time that science discovered the importance of relationships in the structure of the universe, art discovered that a language of painting and sculpture could grow from the simplest possible relationships – the division of the flat space of the picture surface or the free co-ordination of masses in space. In spite of their widely different personalities, there is a complete correspondence between the late paintings of Klee, Kandinsky, Malevich, Mondrian

and even Matisse. Their surfaces are active, not renderings of reality but complex signs, and they are read in time as the eye 'grazes' (Klee's word) over the surface. In sculpture Brancusi, though he worked from objects of the exterior world, purified their form into an expression of latent possibility; his 'Bird in Space' expresses an immaterial concept, the 'essence of flight'. Gabo adopted methods similar to an engineer's to re-express the experience of nature as an interaction of forces in space.

Moholy-Nagy followed the work of his contemporaries closely and saw its possibilities – probably even before the artists themselves. He saw that once art dropped its representational role, once its space became real, it abolished its distance, its separateness, from the outside world and from the spectator. The work ceased to be an observation of the world and became a participant in it. Similarly the spectator, 'hitherto merely receptive in the observation of works of art, experiences a heightening of his own faculties, and becomes himself an active partner with the forces unfolding themselves'. Remarkably enough, Moholy-Nagy wrote this in 1922, already seeing a need to *immerse* himself in processes of change and transformation. Eight years later he described in 'The New Vision' how water might be used in an art of the future:

'If we turn to the transformations of water, we come upon a surprising phenomenon – surprising not in its strangeness but in its commonplaceness. We know water in rest, in motion, in gaseous form, in liquid and solid form. We know it as tiny drops, as the smooth reflecting surface of a pond, stretching far and wide. We know it as a placid or rushing brook, as a raging sea, as pattering rainfall, as a spraying fountain, as a drifting cloud of steam. We know it frozen: as snow crystal, frosted window-panes, icicles, etc. Its changes arise from an extraordinary adaptability to the forces acting upon it.'

This last sentence is a key to the works in this show. They have a much more complex and dynamic kind of balance than the early works of abstract art. It's much more like the harmony a living body has: the co-ordination of functions in continually changing situations, where a body lives through its relations to things outside it and can't be considered an isolated phenomenon.

By describing movement in terms of space, I've tried to relate it to an evolving process of discovery over the century. And to the work of other contemporary artists who may not use actual movement (and are therefore excluded from this exhibition) but whose feeling for space shares the freedom and fluidity, the organic complexity and adaptability of the work of the artists who are represented. The sculpture of Camargo and Chillida, to take two examples, seems to me to share a similar search for a 'living structure' – the work revealing its structure in space and time simultaneously – as the kinetic sculpture of Takis or Lygia Clark. It seems to have evolved far further from the achievement of the first abstract artists than for example the kinetic sculpture of Schöffer, which is a kind of motorized version of the 'closed' space structure of the constructivists of the 'twenties.'

'Living structures': this doesn't mean that each artist in this exhibition is searching for the same thing. Each of them finds in fact that a different force motivates the life of the work.

Takis is preoccupied with energy. Each of his sculptures is a new attempt to make energy visible. Nearly every element he uses is some kind of indicator, flickering in a stream of unseen forces: needles, dials, compasses, lights, magnets. His sculpture has the refinement and at the same time the plainness of an infinitely receptive communication-system: he strips his forms down until he feels they are bare enough to be alert to the space around. Takis' sculpture celebrates the kind of movement that only recently entered our experience: the crossing of space, floating in defiance of gravity, the transference of electrons from body to body without constraint. It's probably because his sculptures have this canalising role that they so often seem to resemble flowers. Not any particular flower, but the flowers' activity in drawing energy up from the earth and throwing it out into space as blossom.

In Lygia Clark's work the motivating force is the spectator. Her hinged constructions invite the spectator to make use of his own creativeness by changing the combinations of spaces in front of him and finding new ones. The key to Lygia's work is that this process is not arbitrary. The 'beasts' are so constructed that the spectator is unobtrusively guided in an organic rhythm. Though the elements are very simple they are functionally related to one another in a moving structure like an organism. If you move it you share in the economy and grace of natural movement. It is an art of gesture, but it's not expressionistic like the gesture of the Abstract Expressionists and their descendents the 'autodestructive' artists. It is constructive; it tends towards harmony. Not a static harmony but a dynamic one of change and renewal, where one kind of space produced by one gesture passes naturally into the next.

Both Soto and Von Graevenitz have wanted to gain a new spatial freedom for painting – painting as distinct from sculpture, since even if their objects are in reality three-dimensional, *perceptually* they are two-dimensional. In other words it is the surface which is in motion. Unlike the painters of the past Soto uses illusion in an active way; his 'Vibrations' don't refer to representational conventions but play directly on the physical shortcomings of our eyes. The bar, superimposed on a lined screen, seems to dissolve into vibrations, creating a fluid kind of space apparently shot through with traces of pure energy. Soto sees the value of presenting this apparent reality just as it is. He makes no attempt to disguise his means, to make a mystery out of the process. Through his use of illusion he presents the instability of matter to us very

subtly and directly, and not without irony. We are forced to ask ourselves if we ever see things as they really are. Von Graevenitz's work is even more simple. There is no composition in the old sense; the elements are anonymous and regularly arranged. Only when they move does a network of relationships of such complexity grow that the spectator doesn't easily tire of this unhurried, almost respiratory rhythm. His work is more prescribed than Soto's, very clear and firm in its principles and rather more rigid.

Kinetic relationships that we all know well and experience in particular forms in nature are echoed in these works, though by the use of impersonal elements they have taken away the characteristics which limit the forms to particular places, particular dimensions, particular speeds and energies – retaining only the essential rhythm. Colombo's glass box into which a long steel band is fed and then extracted continuously thus has a strange density, a compulsive movement that attracts us deeply, though no image is ever defined. It is much the same in Bury's work. We are suddenly conscious of a very slow time-scale, where beginning and end are completely beyond our reach and we are encouraged to leave behind the purposeful to and fro of our ordinary lives. An exciting extension of this is suggested by Liliane Lijn's 'poem-cones'. Here meaning fluctuates and changes not by changing the words themselves, but by changes in their speed and size. At a certain speed one line dissolves into a blur – its verbal sense disappears, it takes on a visual significance – while a line of bigger words above it flicks by with a steady pulse. David Medalla's foam-sculpture goes perhaps further than any towards an autonomous structure which exists as part of nature. It forms itself and is free to grow as it likes. It is only controlled by the height above ground, and the speed at which it emerges, and the shape of the box. Otherwise it is open to the chance influence of the environment: wind, rain, even atmospheric pressure. It's fascinating to watch it as it tends, like nature itself, towards economy of form: firm directions, even curves. One remembers the desire of earlier sculptors to use material with no 'art-history'; Medalla's foam has no history or future of any kind. It's differently formed each moment. Not because it has an enormous variety of inbuilt changes, but because its whole structure evolves from within and adapts itself to outside influences.

Tinguely is the only artist here who uses movement, the language of space and time, for partly satirical reasons. But he has usually managed to combine this social criticism with a flamboyant conquest of new territories in sculpture. He is best known for his gigantic self-destructive machines, the first of which was detonated before an invited audience at New York's Museum of Modern Art in 1961. It was fairly explicit in its satire (it contained a device for endlessly smashing Coke bottles) but the later ones have had a more refined complexity and pointlessness. I think his radio sculptures are his best works on a small scale. The sculpture picks up the local radio stations, and something of the banality of each passing day is pulled into the machine and wildly torn to pieces.

I've tried to show that kinetic art can't be treated in isolation, as another style or 'ism' in art. It is a natural extension of the revolution of twentieth-century art. In the work of the best kinetic artists, such as these here, it is not 'effects' of movement which are sought after but a new and freer kind of space, a freer kind of frame to place us in the world. This freedom is precisely the fact that the works will not be the same tomorrow. They live with us in the present. Yet to 'understand' this intellectual argument is not to experience the works of art in this exhibition. Works of art do not convince by argument but by presence. They are there to communicate feeling. For example, it is not primarily the *idea* that the spectator participates directly that is impressive about Lygia Clark's work, it is the sense of reality, of vitality, the spectator actually feels in participating.

Guy Brett

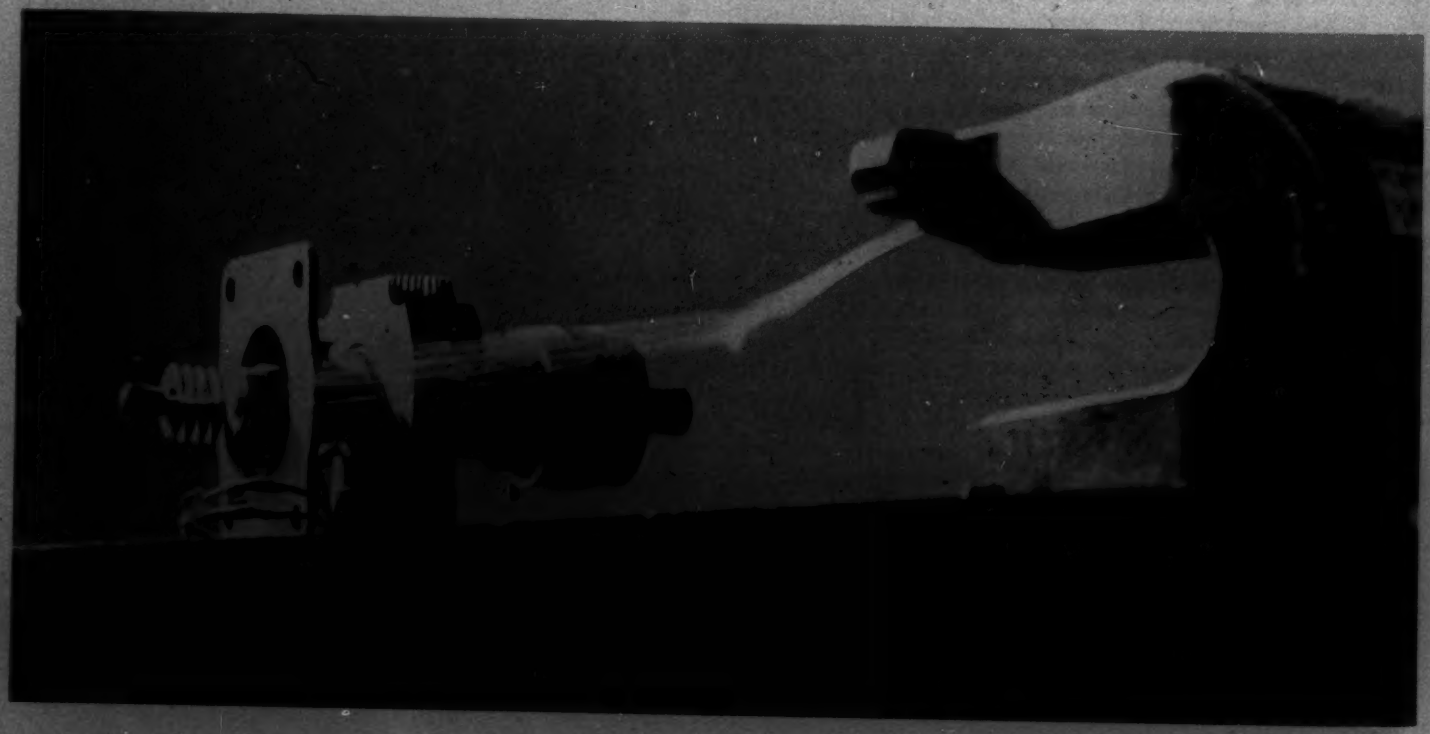
Takis

1925: born in Athens. 1946: made his first sculpture. Lived in London 1954–8/Paris 1954–66. Feb. 1955 first individual exhibition at the Hanover Gallery, London. 1959: first magnetic sculptures. Nov. 1960: put a man in space with magnetic power, Iris Clert Gallery, Paris. 1964: retrospective magnetic sculpture (1959–64), Signals, London. Lives in London.

For me there is no great difference between electro-magnetism and any other kind of material. Only with electro-magnetism you can see the energy, the transformations which exist in all material more easily because it acts quicker, nearer a time-scale we can be conscious of. Electro-magnetism is not an isolated phenomenon but a universal principle, electricity the same: the visible part of the life all materials live in space. I get close to the spirit of electricity by observing how material has been treated by men who wish to use electricity. In these lamps for example: the coil, the connections, the bulbs; they take the form they do to make visible an infinite invisible force.
The Telemagnetic sculptures are to show the quick motions of material. All the materials move, all the molecules displace themselves. And you can observe it, you can handle it, you can feel it with your body. In ordinary material you cannot. The material tries to keep its own tension, balance between inside and outside. A horseshoe magnet is an open circle, so the energy is forced out and can be used. The waves themselves would much rather it was closed so they could circulate freely; they always want to go back to their source. The scrap of metal floating in the magnetic stream makes the stream visible, and the waves return to the magnet across the little gap of empty space.

London, August 1966.

Telemagnetique April 1965
photo: Guy Brett



Catalogue

All dimensions are in inches, height x width x length. Unless otherwise mentioned, all works are lent by the Signals Gallery, London.

At the time of going to press, it was not known precisely what would be available by Jean Tinguely.

Due to the limited space of the Bear Lane Gallery, not all the works listed below will be exhibited there.

Takis

1 Ballet Magnetique 1962 diameter 13
lent by Guy Brett

2 Telemagnetique: flying field 1963 67 x 76
lent by Guy Brett

3 Ballet Magnetique, Hommage à Vaslav Nijinsky 1964
lent by the artist

4 Telemagnetique April 1965 15 x 20 x 7
lent by Guy Brett

5 Yellow Electron Paris 1966 23 x 7
lent by Guy Brett

6 Telesculpture Musicale Lumineuse (yellow) Paris 1966
24 x 79

7 Three Compasses 1966
lent by the artist

Lygia Clark

Eight articulated sculptures of varying sizes:

8 Project for a planet 1960

9 Grand point 1960

10 Gold Beast 1960

11, 12, 13 Three Beasts 1961

14 Husking (Desfohaldo) 1960
lent by David Medalla

15 Monument in all situations 1964
lent by Guy Brett

Jesús-Rafael Soto

16 Vibration Structure 1964
lent by David Medalla

17 Relations: yellow and silver
16 black squares + 12 silver squares 1965 42 x 62

18 Grand Relation-Vibration
24 black squares + 24 blue squares 1965 42 x 84

19 Virtual Planes (yellow and white) 1965 36 x 36
lent by Guy Brett

20 Virtual Planes (white on white) 1966 42 x 42

21 Vibration: two small planes in space 1966 11 x 12
lent by David Medalla

David Medalla

22 Cloud Canyons No. 7: Bubble-machine 1966
lent by the artist

Gerhard von Graevenitz

These works are undated but all were made since 1962

23 Round kinetic object: white with small black discs diameter 25

24 Round kinetic object: white with black discs diameter 25

25 Square kinetic object: black with short white strips 40 x 40

26 Play-object: black and white diameter 22

27 Play-object: red and green 31 x 31

Pol Bury

28 Retrattile 1963 74 x 28
lent by the Kasmin Gallery

Gianni Colombo

29 Fluid structuralization 1960
lent by the artist

Liliane Lijn

30 Poem machine 1965 height 17

Lygia Clark

1920: born in Belo Horizonte, Brazil. 1947: studied under the landscape architect Roberto Burle Marx. 1950: went to Paris and studied under Leger, Dobrinsky and Arpad Szenes. Co-founded the Brazilian Neo-Concrete Group MAM in 1959. 1965: first retrospective exhibition of articulated sculpture, Signals, London. Lives in Rio de Janeiro.

My work demands manipulation if it is really to express itself. I should like it to participate in life in every way which may be demanded of it. As it is as toys, as an amusement, as therapy, as a study for the formulation of spaces, etc. Indeed I would prefer my work to be in an everyday environment, rather than in museums and galleries. The ideal thing would be for it to have been hurled in large quantities at the man in the street – a thing which it has been impossible for me to do here in Brazil. At the same time I do not deny its expressive character as a work of art; but it suggests for itself another place in the world, since it is a highly participant art.

Rio de Janeiro, 1966.

The 'Beast' has his own and well-defined cluster of movements which react to the promptings of the spectator. He is not made of isolated static forms which can be manipulated at random as in a game; no, his parts are functionally related to each other, as if he were a living organism; and the movements of these parts are interlinked. The interlinking of the spectator's action and the 'beast's' immediate answer is what forms this new relationship, made possible precisely because the 'beast' moves – i.e. has a life of his own.

Rio de Janeiro, 1964.

Beasts, metal grubs and reliefs
photo: Clay Perry

Jesús-Rafael Soto

1923: born in Ciudad Bolivar, Venezuela. At 15 worked as a sign painter for cinemas in Ciudad Bolivar. 1942–7: School of Fine Arts, Caracas. 1950: participated in the decoration of the University City of Caracas designed by Villanueva. 1947: became Director of the School of Fine Arts at Maracaibo. 1950: resigned and left for Paris. 1954: first superimposed paintings in perspex. 1956: spiral perspex superimpositions. 1962: works with suspended bars, fixed squares, etc. 1965: retrospective vibrations (1950–65). Signals, London. Lives in Paris.

What has always interested me has been the transformation of elements, the dematerialization of solid matter. I wanted to incorporate the process of transformation in the work itself. Thus, as you watch, the pure line is transformed by optical illusion into pure vibration, the material into energy. Of course it all depends on the elements one uses and the way one uses them, but the transformations can always be different, and really I leave it alone to behave as it likes. But I do use elements which seem to me the purest and most unadorned, because I want this transformation to take place in perfect equilibrium.
Paris, April 1965.

Vibration Structure 1964 ; photo: Clay Perry

Jean Tinguely

1923: born in Fribourg. 1941–5: studied at the School of Fine Arts in Basel, built sound-making watermills. 1945–52: abstract painting constructions in iron-wire, metal, wood and paper; edible sculptures in grass, uses speed as means of dematerialization. 1955: sound-making metarobot-painting-machines. 1959: bombs the city of Dusseldorf with 15,000 manifestos: 'For Statics'. First Paris Biennale (same year): Metamatic machine produced 40,000 multi-coloured paintings. March 1960: New York, Museum of Modern Art: 'Homage to New York', self-destructive Happening-machine. Sept. 1961: Copenhagen, Louisiana Museum: 'Study for an End of the World', self-destructive sculpture. March 1962: 'End of the World', self-destructive sculpture in the Nevada Desert in collaboration with NBC. Lives in France.

It's maddening, the work I'm doing. The possibilities are immense. After all, we're living in an age when the wildest fantasies become daily truths. Anything is possible. Dematerialization, for example, that will enable people to travel by becoming sound waves or something. Why not?

These things are serious for me. Absurdity can be carried a long way, and when it's carried far enough, its effect is to make conventional values ridiculous, cut them down to size, cast some badly needed doubt on this 'wonderful age' we're living in. 'Century of the Common Man'! Man today is ill-treated, humbled as he has never been before.

I take the noise and blood and brutality and make a work of art of them. That makes them doubly ironic, to be raised to the level of art. I feel a tremendous relief that the whole thing is going to be destroyed, because it's like a lunatic end to everything monstrous in the world.

One guard at the Stockholm museum . . . he's a fanatic. He loves for them to break down, just so he can fix them. Whenever I go into the place, he greets me with an eager look, rubbing his hands. 'Hasn't broken down yet,' he'll tell me. 'But don't worry, I'll fix it if it does.'

Statements made to William R. Byron on the occasion of Tinguely's demonstration of his suicide machine, Study No. 2 for an End of the World, detonated on the desert south of Las Vegas on March 21, 1962. These statements were originally printed in the *Saturday Evening Post*, April 21, 1962. Reprinted Signals *Newsbulletin*, September 1964.

Homage to New York: autodestructive sculpture, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1960
photo: David Gahr

David Medalla

1942: born in Manila, Philippines. Self-taught as an artist. 1956: studied Greek drama at Columbia University, NY. 1960: arrived in England. 1962: first one-man show at Mayflower Barn, Jordans, Bucks. 1964: first foam sculptures and sand machine. Since 1964: edits Signals *Newsbulletin*. Lives in London.

My sculptures breathe and perspire, grow and decay. They correspond to my view of external and internal reality. Naturally I do not see any demarcation between internal and external 'reality'. For me, interior space and exterior space are mutually interchangeable, in Lygia Clark's words 'inside is outside' – and access from the one to the other is made possible through rhythm . . . the continuous, tangible phases of duration. I am interested in the possibilities of spontaneous growth. Like Takis, I sculpt energy. I use the elements – through the elements I wish to express the dynamism of atomic forces. I seek to find, through these forces, continuous 'melodic structures', which could arouse tenderness and love in the brutalized soul of man today.

Signals, London, 1966.

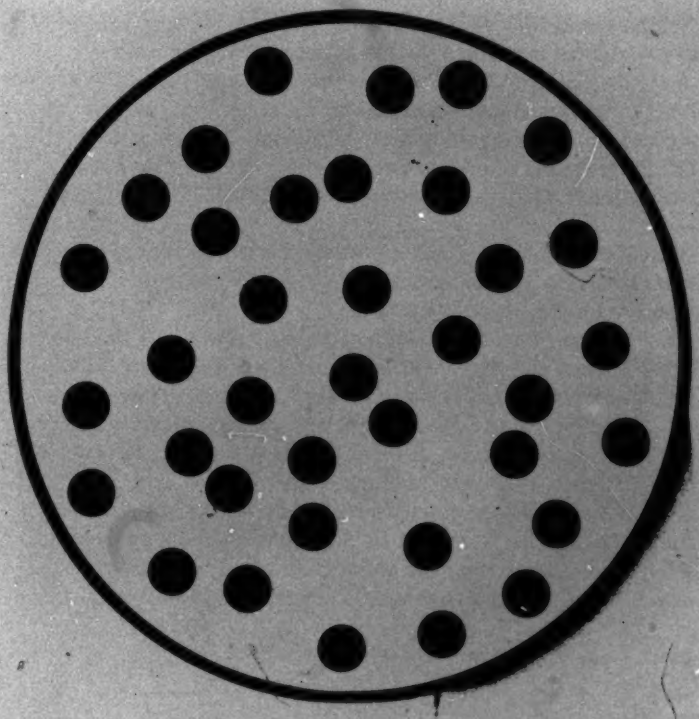
Cloud Canyons 1964 (detail)
photo: Clay Perry

Gerhard von Graevenitz

1934: born in Schilde, Mark Brandenburg. 1955–7: studied economics at the University of Frankfurt. 1957–61: studied art, the Kunstakademie, Munich. 1959–60: published the magazine *Nota*. 1960: directed the Galerie Nota in Munich. 1962: co-founded the international art movement 'nouvelle tendance'. 1966: first individual show in England: Signals, London. Lives in Munich.

The work is not the reflection of any experience. The spectator is free and able to make his own experiences. It can be that the artist is his own spectator – in fact he is still in most cases the first spectator. But it can come to a point where there is no difference between spectator and creator. Where the spectator is creator.

August 1966.



Round kinetic object: white with small black discs
photo: Clay Perry

Pol Bury

1922: born in Maine-Sainte Pierre, Belgium. 1938–9: studied at the Academie des Beaux Arts in Mons. 1945: participated in the 'International Exhibition of Surrealism' in Brussels. 1953: exhibited his first mobiles at the Gallery Apollo, Brussels. 1961: exhibited his motorized black and white mobiles, Brussels. In the same year left Brussels and moved to Fontenay-aux-Roses, near Paris. Now lives at Saulx-les-Chartreux, near Paris.

Between the immobile and mobility, a certain quality of slowness reveals to us a field of 'actions' in which the eye is no longer able to trace an object's journeys.
Given a globe travelling from A to B, the memory we shall retain of its point of departure will be a function of the slowness with which it achieves its journey. Our eye, our memory have lost the memory of A. Only the quality of slowness allows it to obliterate its own tracks, to be an eraser of memory, to make us forget its past. Perceived in terms of slowness, A is no longer the point of departure towards B. One no longer knows whether the globe is going from A to B, or whether A is the point of arrival, or even whether the globe, in its circumnavigation, has any connection any longer with any supposed A or B whatsoever.

from 'Time Dilates' Studio International 5/65.

107 balls of different volumes 1964
collection: Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam
photo: André Morain

Gianni Colombo

1937: born in Milan. Since 1959 has been doing research and production in the field of cine-visual perception in collaboration with Group T. Began with surface constructions set in motion by the observer, and later did similar works electrically powered. Lives in Milan.

Since it abandoned representation and freed itself from references to a pre-existing subject, visual art has tended to establish an increasingly specific kind of communication, a communication that is totally visual (in other words, based on direct visual sensibility – ideas which cannot, for example, be communicated by words). It may be possible to construct the visual work of art as one would a test; in other words, one retains enough perceptive ambiguity in the components to prevent the spectator from launching himself on a single known interpretation.
The visual elements in my work are stripped of any kind of analogical or evocative function; their role is that of an indicator of rhythm. These are not forms intended to seduce the imagination of the spectator but to stimulate in him psychological reflexes.

Milan, 1963–5.

Fluid structuralization 1960
photo: Gianni Colombo

Liliane Lijn

1941: born in New York. Self-taught as an artist. 1963: individual exhibition in Paris. Lived in Europe since 1957, In Paris and Greece since 1959. 1963: first perspex light objects and poem machines.

Movement puts TIME in my work. It has moments which may not repeat. The element of time is even more interesting if, in time, the work moves, not in a circle, recurrent, but outward. I think this is possible using materials with a comparatively long life span. So even after I have finished a piece of work it still goes on making itself . . . reacting to exterior impulses. This becomes real movement. Through movement in my work, I am discovering real time. It has another name. My own subjective awareness of time is EARTH time. Radiation emanating from things around me create patterns on my brain and when these things change continually, patterns multiply . . . (perhaps because I am moving) my conception of time stretches . . . I lose the meaning of a day or an hour. My work moving should also emit changing light patterns to radiate other brains. And perhaps the spectator will lose sense of time.

Athens, August 1966.

Two Cones 1960
collection the artist
photo: Gloaguen